

Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly  
March 2, 2016  
Aiken Hall, Morgan Room, Champlain College

Minutes

Present: 14; start time 7:06 pm.

1. Peter Keating welcomed participants and moderated the meeting. Minutes from December 2015 and February 2016 were approved.
2. Phet Keomanyvanh, the new liaison between the NPAs and CEDO, briefly discussed her role and that of the NPA structure. Her position as Community Development Specialist is to promote engagement and outreach between residents and government, to coordinate City Hall's internship program, and to promote diversity. She's available at the CEDO office by phone or visit.
3. John Caulo, representing Champlain College, gave an update on the Eagle's Landing dorm project. It is in the design phase with ground breaking set for late 2016. Main campus courtyard improvements will take place this summer. Sandy Yusen of Champlain College discussed coming campus events including a new art gallery exhibit and a new newsletter being created for the community. Spring break will close the campus from March 12 to March 20. Question: Is the contractor chosen for Eagle's Landing? Answer: Yes, H.B. Cummings of New Hampshire which has done previous work on campus. Q. When will ground breaking take place? A. This isn't certain but over the 2016-17 winter. Opening would likely be fall 2017. Q. Will you use ground-water heating and cooling? A. No, not applicable to this site. But the building will be energy efficient.
4. Lisa Kingsbury of UVM said that 61 Summit Street, the Alumni House, is proceeding toward a June/July 2016 opening. We appreciate community comments on the landscape design. We will meet with the Harrington Terrace residents soon to discuss details of that design and there may be small adjustments. Our new dorms will open 12/17. The STEM building is taking shape. The former Presbyterian church on campus will be rehabilitated and serve as an interdenominational religious center, opening fall 2016. There will be additional UVM signs going up at entry locations other than on Main Street. Q. What's happening with Slate Hall? A. It is set for renovation and will likely open next year. It was a student cooperative dorm. Its new status is uncertain. Q. Will you replace the large trees that were removed from around Alumni House with large trees? A. No. Q. Will the campus walk-bike master plan be available? A. Yes, a draft will soon be ready.
5. Karen Paul, Ward 6 Council Member, gave an update on Council business. This next Monday New Moran and the Town Center will be on the agenda. There will be good news about New Moran. Design modifications are incorporated into the Town Center plan. Moody's has announced a two-step upgrade the City's credit rating to the A category, a major improvement from the near junk bond status of recent years. Thank you for the good turnout on Town Meeting Day; it was between 1400 and 1500, high considering that no one was running for Council at this time. Joan

Shannon had a family engagement and couldn't attend this NPA. Q. I understand that UVM fraternities and sororities will soon be liable for property taxes, is this so? A. That's a state determination and has long been on the state's agenda. Q. How much difference will it make for city revenue? A. Not much, though it will bring in more money for education. It is significant for the sororities and fraternities themselves. It could bring in \$50-70,000. Q. Is there ward-by-ward data on the election? A. It is on Google (from Caroline Saba). Q. Will Council defer to the North End voters on the North Avenue Pilot Project? A. The Pilot will go forward. At the end we will take seriously North End sentiment when we consider making the lane changes permanent. But the roads belong to residents in the entire city. Q. Are regulatory delays slowing the Town Mall? A. We need to help move it forward and it is in-progress in so far as TIF funding is concerned. Q. Did the city give away that block of St. Paul Street incorporated into the mall in the 1980s for free? And will the city have to purchase the street from Sinex in order to re-open it as a public street? A. I don't know but I don't think we have to repurchase the street. Q. On other ward-specific issues, should all the city have to weigh in? A. Getting signatures and holding votes city-wide is in the petition process. In this case, the streets belong to all of us. Q. I read on the City web site that turnout in Wards 4 and 7 exceeded 100%. How is that possible? A. Phet reached out to the Clerk/Treasure's Office for an answer. The reasoning given for inflated participation numbers was because there were two different ballots that voters were able to cast this election (local ballot and presidential primary ballot). The automated report that was posted on Election night did not differentiate between the two different types of ballots. So, the participation in that report was approximately double in actual participation because most voters cast both ballots. On March 4<sup>th</sup> another document was posted that reflect actual participation rates for each ward in each election.

Q. Voters reported being asked their party status when voting and that information was written down. That made some refuse to vote. A. I'll check into this. If you ask for an absentee ballot you need to specify a party.

5. Stephanie Sequino from the Burlington School Board gave an update. Thank you for helping to pass the budget. We were able to show a 1.5 million dollar surplus this last year which was used to decrease the budget increase and allow us to meet the Act 46 targets. We are looking at a multi-year strategic planning process, discussing, for example, the possible introduction of foreign languages at lower grades. This year we had a trauma response training program for school personnel because we know that students under economic or personal stress are twice as likely to drop out. We want to help manage their behavior rather than punish them. The board's goal is to reach a contract with the teachers' union, one that the community can afford, that meets instructional needs, and makes Burlington an employer of choice. We will be going to mediation. Q. We need a line-item budget to better understand school expenditures. A. That would be over 3,000 lines of data. We do have a lot on our website. We need to publicize student outcomes. Q. The B.H.S. student paper, the Register, had a great article on the school budget, better than that in the Free Press. I congratulate the students. As you go to mediation, will the mediator be neutral? A. Yes. Both sides have to agree on the mediator. This comes after teams from both sides try and fail to reach an agreement. At this point we are opening the discussion to the public. After mediation

comes fact finding. Q. Does a state-wide contract make sense? A. There isn't the political support for that.

6. Jennifer Green of CEDO discussed the city's Climate Action Plan. COP21 brought leaders from 193 countries to Paris and they agreed on climate targets to limit temperature rise. Burlington was the first U.S. city to have a Climate Action Plan, and did so in 2000. Now we have longitudinal data we can track. We look at greenhouse gas emissions and we see a drop from all sources except in the transportation area. We have adopted a 38 point strategy to address climate change. Q. What's the low-hanging fruit? A. Conservation. The Champlain Challenge offers landlords 75% of the cost of increasing weatherization of their properties. Q. Total vehicle miles dropped after 2009 including per/person. This reversed in the last year due to cheap gas. Did you look at the public health impacts of the North Avenue Pilot? A. (from Peter) The Health Department did. We may not have sufficiently publicized this.
7. Items for future NPA meetings: Please email the steering committee with your suggestions. Suggestions from the audience:
  - a. How can we address our decrepit rental housing stock so as to improve housing? (Phet will check with CEDO on this.)
  - b. The quality of water in Lake Champlain, and storm water management.
  - c. Could DPW give us information on any lead that might be in our drinking water from the piping system?
  - d. Could we have a map of the Hill-area surface and subsurface water?
  - e. Can we look at youth unemployment, and social support for those zero to three years old?
  - f. Trash collection and recycling need to be made more efficient, consolidated. Much of it blows around and many services work the same streets. Could it be an Uber model?
  - g. We need to celebrate the completion of the Cliff Street sidewalk.

Motion to adjourn moved and passed at 8:25pm.

Respectfully presented, Charles Simpson